

Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (for drug offenders)

Benefit-cost estimates updated December 2015. Literature review updated April 2012.

Current estimates replace old estimates. Numbers will change over time as a result of model inputs and monetization methods.

The WSIPP benefit-cost analysis examines, on an apples-to-apples basis, the monetary value of programs or policies to determine whether the benefits from the program exceed its costs. WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies has three main steps. First, we determine "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using a statistical technique called meta-analysis. Second, we calculate whether the benefits of a program exceed its costs. Third, we estimate the risk of investing in a program by testing the sensitivity of our results. For more detail on our methods, see our [technical documentation](#).

Program Description: Washington State's Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (DOSA) allows certain offenders to receive reduced prison terms in exchange for completing chemical dependency treatment while incarcerated. Findings indicate DOSA is effective and significantly lowers recidivism rates for drug offenders, but has no statistically significant effect on recidivism rates of property offenders.

Benefit-Cost Summary

Program benefits		Summary statistics	
Participants	\$0	Benefit to cost ratio	\$12.39
Taxpayers	\$5,865	Benefits minus costs	\$18,223
Other (1)	\$11,828	Probability of a positive net present value	98 %
Other (2)	\$2,130		
Total	\$19,823		
Costs	(\$1,600)		
Benefits minus cost	\$18,223		

The estimates shown are present value, life cycle benefits and costs. All dollars are expressed in the base year chosen for this analysis (2014). The economic discount rates and other relevant parameters are described in our [technical documentation](#).

Detailed Monetary Benefit Estimates

Source of benefits	Benefits to				
	Participants	Taxpayers	Other (1)	Other (2)	Total benefits
From primary participant					
Crime	\$0	\$5,865	\$11,827	\$2,928	\$20,620
Adjustment for deadweight cost of program	\$0	\$0	\$1	(\$798)	(\$797)
Totals	\$0	\$5,865	\$11,828	\$2,130	\$19,823

We created the two "other" categories to report results that do not fit neatly in the "participant" or "taxpayer" perspectives. In the "Other (1)" category we include the benefits of reductions in crime victimization, the economic spillover benefits of improvement in human capital outcomes, and the benefits from private or employer-paid health insurance. In the "Other (2)" category we include estimates of the net changes in the value of a statistical life and net changes in the deadweight costs of taxation.

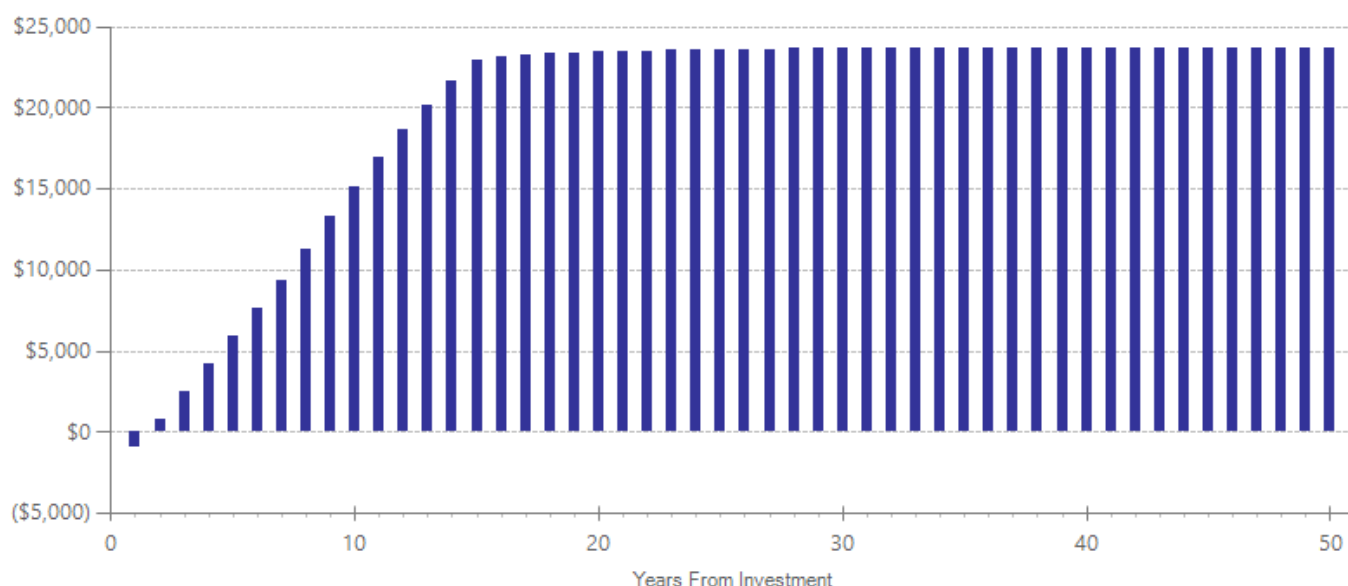
Detailed Cost Estimates

	Annual cost	Program duration	Year dollars	Summary statistics	
Program costs	\$1,319	1	2004	Present value of net program costs (in 2014 dollars)	(\$1,600)
Comparison costs	\$0	1	2004	Uncertainty (+ or - %)	10 %

Aos, S., Phipps, P., Barnoski, R. (2004). Washington's Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative: An evaluation of benefits and costs (Document No. 05-01-1901). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

The figures shown are estimates of the costs to implement programs in Washington. The comparison group costs reflect either no treatment or treatment as usual, depending on how effect sizes were calculated in the meta analysis. The uncertainty range is used in Monte Carlo risk analysis, described in our [technical documentation](#).

Cumulative Net Cash Flows Over Time (Non-Discounted Dollars)



Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	Primary or secondary participant	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)		Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis					
						First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated		
				ES	p-value	ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age
Crime	Primary	1	264	-0.272	0.015	-0.272	0.111	32	-0.272	0.111	42

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

Drake, E. K. (2006). *Washington's drug offender sentencing alternative: An update on recidivism findings* (Document No. 06-12-1901). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

For further information, contact:
(360) 586-2677, institute@wsipp.wa.gov

Printed on 04-30-2016



Washington State Institute for Public Policy

The Washington State Legislature created the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in 1983. A Board of Directors—representing the legislature, the governor, and public universities—governs WSIPP and guides the development of all activities. WSIPP's mission is to carry out practical research, at legislative direction, on issues of importance to Washington State.